

REGION 2 SOCIAL MEDIA

[HYPERLINK

"https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Ftwitter.com%2FEPAregion2&data=04%7C01%7CMcbay.Stephen%40epa.gov%7Cda9de944bab34f63d17d08d8ee0fb134%7C88b378b367484867acf976aacbeca6a7%7C0%7C0%7C637521098507896884%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikl1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=FYSIsVyNUvrzb2lccRz%2BI1%2FYqEpglIXF7dLPfrnv99s%3D&reserved=0"] – **14.8k followers**

[HYPERLINK

"https://gcc02.safelinks.protection.outlook.com/?url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.facebook.com%2FEparegion2%2F&data=04%7C01%7CMcbay.Stephen%40epa.gov%7Cda9de944bab34f63d17d08d8ee0fb134%7C88b378b367484867acf976aacbeca6a7%7C0%7C0%7C637521098507906841%7CUnknown%7CTWFpbGZsb3d8eyJWljoiMC4wLjAwMDAiLCJQIjoiV2luMzliLCJBTiI6Ikl1haWwiLCJXVCi6Mn0%3D%7C1000&sdata=l7H1yPgaTd0tsGM8dVP8EekJ1k4Mm1dYMXd32kX44y0%3D&reserved=0"] – **15.6k followers**

REGION 2 NEWS

[HYPERLINK "https://buffalonews.com/news/local/as-lake-ontario-plan-revision-looms-regulators-create-new-flood-forecast-tool/article_f1033a74-88fe-11ec-adbf-5fdb6e65f42f.html"]

The committee working on an overhaul of the plan that governs water-level management in Lake Ontario has developed a computer model that may predict the impact of higher water on lakefront property.

[HYPERLINK "https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/notas/comunidades-de-arecibo-siguen-luchando-para-clausurar-el-vertedero-municipal/"]

The claim is almost 50 years old and regained strength after a fire at the facility, to which the neighbors attribute contamination and health problems, something that the private operator rejects [Video story].

[HYPERLINK "https://gothamist.com/news/harris-says-newark-is-a-national-role-model-for-lead-pipe-replacement"]

Vice President Kamala Harris touched down in Newark on Friday to tout the city's replacement of more than 23,000 lead water pipes in less than three years as a "role model" for the rest of the country.

[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/us/politics/kamala-harris-lead-pipes-newark.html"]

Some civil rights leaders have grown frustrated with the lack of action behind administration proposals that would help Black and Latino communities.

[HYPERLINK "https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-new-york-new-jersey-energy/2022/02/14/cow-poop-and-landfill-gas-shipped-to-california-00008502"]

While New York and California race to achieve ambitious emissions cuts and lead the way on fighting climate change, the two states are on a collision course over an unusual suspect: using cow poop as fuel to power trucks.

[HYPERLINK "<https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2022/02/11/kamala-harris-newark-lead-pipe-project-funds-environment>"]

Vice President Kamala Harris traveled to Newark, New Jersey on Friday to highlight the city's efforts to remove all lead pipes from its water system, saying the administration hopes to model a nationwide effort after Newark's program.

[HYPERLINK "<https://viconsortium.com/vi-investigations/virgin-islands-waste-management-spent-15-5-million-without-ensuring-it-got-best-deal-operated-on-years-long-expired-contracts-failed-to-follow-competitive-bidding-processes-audit-finds>"]

The latest audit from the V.I. Office of the Inspector General has concluded with more damning findings of yet another government entity, this time the V.I. Waste Management Authority, which the O.I.G. found was woefully incompetent in the way its leaders have operated WMA.

[HYPERLINK "<https://bit.ly/3nYNPVS>"]

NATIONAL

***See attached email**

FULL ARTICLES

REGION 2

Buffalo News

[HYPERLINK "https://buffalonews.com/news/local/as-lake-ontario-plan-revision-looms-regulators-create-new-flood-forecast-tool/article_f1033a74-88fe-11ec-adbf-5fdb6e65f42f.html"]

As Lake Ontario plan revision looms, regulators create new flood forecast tool

February 13, 2022

Thomas J. Prohaska

The committee working on an overhaul of the plan that governs water-level management in Lake Ontario has developed a computer model that may predict the impact of higher water on lakefront property.

For the first time, the International Joint Commission has technology that can attempt to forecast how many homes and businesses would be flooded in a given area by a specific rise in water levels.

IJC Public Affairs Officer Ed Virden said Tuesday that the first phase of proposed policy changes, zeroing in on response to high water, will be released for a 60-day public comment period around the end of February.

But in the meantime, the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence River Adaptive Management Committee, which insiders call GLAM, has created a tool to help lake-level regulators make better decisions.

The International Lake Ontario-St. Lawrence River Board, an IJC subsidiary, has only one way to adjust the level of the lake: altering the amount of water allowed to flow past the Moses-Saunders Dam at Massena, down the St. Lawrence and into the Atlantic Ocean.

According to [HYPERLINK "<https://ijc.org/en/decision-support-tool-helps-inform-lake-ontario-outflow-decisions>" \t "_blank"] on the IJC website, the computer tool is based on research into what the water level conditions were on specific flood-damage days in specific locations during the floods of 2017 and 2019.

"This data formed the basis of the tool, which projects the likely real-world impacts of high water over the coming six months on shoreline properties, commercial shipping, recreational boating, municipal infrastructure and other interests. It then shows how a given deviation strategy may change those impacts for better or for worse," wrote Steve Orr, a Rochester science writer working with GLAM.

"For instance, the tool shows the number of waterfront homes that could be hit by flood waters on the lakeshore versus the riverbank if a given deviation was implemented," Orr wrote.

The tool has not been posted on any public website, although Orr's article included a couple of screenshots.

Wind and precipitation changes make flood forecasting difficult, Virden said. "This is a model that relies on data that needs constant care and feeding," he said.

The IJC's current policy, called Plan 2014, sets limits on outflows under various circumstances – limits that the IJC began to disregard after coming under political pressure in the wake of the 2017 and 2019 floods.

Critics from local legislators up to then-Gov. Andrew M. Cuomo and Sen. Charles E. Schumer contended the board had botched the flood response by not letting enough water leave the lake soon enough.

In 2019, Cuomo ordered a lawsuit against the IJC to try to recover the state's expenses for responding to flood damage. The suit was transferred from state court to federal court, where U.S. District Judge Elizabeth A. Wolford put the case on hold in October so the sides could try to settle it.

The IJC has consistently held that the floods were caused by unusually wet weather – snowy winters and rainy springs filling the lake with water from the streams and rivers that flow into it.

But at the same time, the Lake-Ontario-St. Lawrence Board has taken a more active approach to water level management in the past two years.

This winter, for instance, the board has deviated from the Plan 2014 limits to allow larger outflows than the plan prescribes for the winter months.

As a couple of heavy snowstorms have come through the region, the board has increased the outflow rates eight times in the past 15 days, according to its website. Virden said one motive for doing that is to promote a stable ice cover near the dam and prevent ice jam flooding.

President Donald Trump appointed a new slate of American members to the IJC in 2018, including former Assemblywoman Jane L. Corwin of Clarence as co-chair. In 2020, the commission ordered an "expedited review" of Plan 2014.

The first phase of that project, which was assigned to GLAM, is almost done and will be released within a few weeks, Virden said Tuesday. The final phase is slated for 2024.

GLAM's work was assisted by an 18-member Public Advisory Group that met virtually with the committee more than two dozen times.

El Nuevo Día

[[HYPERLINK "https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/notas/comunidades-de-arecibo-siguen-luchando-para-clausurar-el-vertedero-municipal/"](https://www.elnuevodia.com/noticias/locales/notas/comunidades-de-arecibo-siguen-luchando-para-clausurar-el-vertedero-municipal/)]

Arecibo communities continue to fight to close the municipal landfill [Translated]

February 11, 2022

Gerardo E. Alvarado Leon

Arecibo - The flames that burned in the [[HYPERLINK "https://www.elnuevodia.com/topicos/arecibo/"\t "_blank"](https://www.elnuevodia.com/topicos/arecibo/)][[HYPERLINK "https://www.elnuevodia.com/topicos/vertederos/"\t "_blank"](https://www.elnuevodia.com/topicos/vertederos/)], on January 1 and 2, revived the struggle of the residents of the Factor 2, Garrochales and Cercadillo communities, in this municipality, to demand the permanent closure of the facility, the which they describe as “a monstrous mountain” and to which they attribute everything from environmental pollution to adverse impacts on their health.

Gothamist

[[HYPERLINK "https://gothamist.com/news/harris-says-newark-is-a-national-role-model-for-lead-pipe-replacement"](https://gothamist.com/news/harris-says-newark-is-a-national-role-model-for-lead-pipe-replacement)]

Harris says Newark is a national ‘role model’ for lead pipe replacement

February 12, 2022

Karen Yi

Vice President Kamala Harris touched down in Newark on Friday to tout the city’s replacement of more than 23,000 lead water pipes in less than three years as a “role model” for the rest of the country.

“Now other cities and other families and children around the country will benefit from the work you did right here,” Harris said during a panel discussion on replacing lead service lines. She was joined by Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Michael Regan, Gov. Phil Murphy, U.S. Senator Cory Booker, Mayor Ras Baraka, and other local officials.

The Newark visit was the first stop on her cross-country tour to promote the \$1 trillion [[HYPERLINK "https://www.whitehouse.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/"](https://www.whitehouse.gov/bipartisan-infrastructure-law/)] President Joe Biden signed last year. The law will set aside \$15 billion to remove lead service lines across the country. New Jersey is expected to get \$48 million this year to start the work, according to the White House.

The issue has some urgency in major metropolitan areas with aging schools and housing stock, and the infrastructure to match. According to the EPA and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, no amount of lead exposure is considered safe, especially in children.

[[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water"](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water)]

"~:text=EPA%20has%20set%20the%20maximum,in%20the%20body%20over%20time." \t "_blank"]

Now other cities and other families and children around the country will benefit from the work you did right here

Vice President Kamala Harris

The [[HYPERLINK "https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Contaminants-of-Concern/Lead"](https://www.awwa.org/Resources-Tools/Resource-Topics/Contaminants-of-Concern/Lead)] estimates there are 350,000 lead service lines in the state, the fifth most in the country. [[HYPERLINK "https://gothamist.com/news/nj-will-replace-all-its-lead-water-pipes-next-decade"](https://gothamist.com/news/nj-will-replace-all-its-lead-water-pipes-next-decade)], however, show utilities don’t know what more than a million pipes are actually made of.

Newark officials acknowledged in 2018 that their treatment processes were “no longer effective” at keeping lead from leaching into drinking water. The city’s woes came quickly on the heels of the [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/documents/_epaoig_20180719-18-p-0221.pdf"](https://www.epa.gov/sites/default/files/2018-07/documents/_epaoig_20180719-18-p-0221.pdf)], along with other contaminants, exposed more than 100,000 residents to unsafe drinking water.

That crisis helped train an eye on aging pipes and other failing infrastructure in communities across the country.

Newark initially estimated that it had 15,000 lead service lines — which pump water from underground mains to people’s homes — and that it would take 10 years to remove them. Ultimately, the city replaced more than 23,000 in three years, at no cost to residents, after Essex County floated \$120 million in bonds for the city.

Harris said lead in the drinking water caused by these old pipes was a “long-standing issue” in communities that had suffered “without acknowledgement of the need for a sense of urgency to fix the issue. Again, this has been a model.”

Newark’s elevated lead levels first spiked in 2017, after the [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nj.com/essex/2019/12/was-newarks-water-crisis-preventable-records-reveal-problems-festered-for-years.html"](https://www.nj.com/essex/2019/12/was-newarks-water-crisis-preventable-records-reveal-problems-festered-for-years.html)], causing old lead pipes to corrode into the tap water. Community activists at NEW Caucus and the Natural Resources Defense Council sued the city, prompting officials to begin distributing water filters while they corrected the treatment and replaced the lead pipes.

Harris praised the work of residents and community activists for continuing to demand solutions.

“When you speak up, it matters, you all are role models for community leaders across the country,” she said.

Across New Jersey, water utilities have to inventory and then replace their lead pipes in 10 years [[HYPERLINK "https://gothamist.com/news/nj-will-replace-all-its-lead-water-pipes-next-decade"](https://gothamist.com/news/nj-will-replace-all-its-lead-water-pipes-next-decade)].

NYT

[HYPERLINK "<https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/11/us/politics/kamala-harris-lead-pipes-newark.html>"]

Harris Says Replacing Lead Pipes Is a Priority, Despite Limited Funding

February 11, 2022

Zolan Kanno-Youngs

Schkeema Troutman had just started describing the many difficulties of trying to raise a family in a city with high levels of lead in its drinking water when Vice President Kamala Harris noticed the mother of three was not being heard.

Ms. Troutman's microphone was not working, limiting her voice to nearly a whisper at a round-table discussion here on Friday. So Ms. Harris stood and handed her microphone over to amplify Ms. Troutman's story.

"You have so many different things to worry about," Ms. Troutman said of owning a home near lead service lines, and the dozens of people in the room could hear her.

"That's the thing," Ms. Harris responded. "You should not have to worry about that."

The brief exchange highlighted the vice president's aim in traveling to Newark, which the administration views as a model of how a community can overcome water contamination after years of neglect. But for Ms. Harris and the White House, the trip was also an opportunity to amplify issues directly affecting underserved communities, particularly amid rising anxiety from civil rights advocates and grass-roots organizations after seeing President Biden's sprawling proposals centered on racial equity slimmed during negotiations with a divided Congress.

The White House has made removing every lead pipe within 10 years in the United States a centerpiece of its plan to address racial disparities and environmental issues in the wake of water contamination crises in recent years from Newark to Flint, Mich. As many as 10 million lead service lines still deliver water to schools, offices, homes and day care centers throughout the country.



Jill Biden, the first lady, confirmed last week that Democrats had cut a proposal to provide two free years of community college. Credit...Drew Angerer/Getty Images

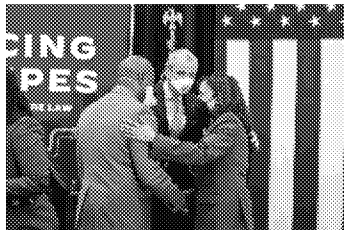
Ms. Harris said Newark, which removed roughly 23,000 lead pipes in nearly three years, could provide a road map for communities across the United States. She described the issue as not just as a "public health crisis," but also one fueling racial disparities.

“Lead pipes do exist in high-income communities, but in high-income communities they have the income to fix it, which means that whether it gets fixed or not might be a function of how much money you have,” Ms. Harris said. “And that’s not right.”

Ms. Harris used the event to highlight \$15 billion in funding to remove lead pipes that is part of the \$1 trillion bipartisan infrastructure package that Mr. Biden signed in November.

Mr. Biden initially proposed \$45 billion in the infrastructure bill for lead removal. Another \$10 billion is tucked in a sprawling social-safety net and climate package torpedoed by congressional gridlock. Other administration proposals that supporters celebrated for promoting racial equity have since been cut or removed entirely as Democrats try to salvage the plan, including investments in affordable housing, clean energy provisions, home health care work and reconnecting neighborhoods divided by highways.

Jill Biden, the first lady, [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/07/us/politics/jill-biden-free-community-college.html"](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/07/us/politics/jill-biden-free-community-college.html)] this week that Democrats had cut a proposal to provide two free years of community college from the legislation, adding to the frustrations of civil rights leaders who say the administration is not prioritizing legislation aimed at helping Black and Latino communities.



Ms. Harris met with Mayor Ras Baraka of Newark, left, and Gov. Phil Murphy of New Jersey after the event on Friday. Credit...Stefan Jeremiah/Associated Press

“Nationwide, frustration is building given the failure to cancel student debt, expand voting rights and pass police reform,” said Derrick Johnson, the president of the N.A.A.C.P. “For the most part, this administration is saying all the right words but there are far too few outcomes to back those up.”

Along with providing the vice president an opportunity to counter those complaints, the trip also gave her a chance to break out of Washington, [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/23/us/politics/kamala-harris-biden-administration.html"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/12/23/us/politics/kamala-harris-biden-administration.html)] that she has lost political momentum and that the White House has sunk her with a portfolio that could produce few political victories.

“One of the tragedies of the first year, and it’s just been a year, has been that she’s been a prisoner of Washington, D.C., and she’s been a prisoner of the press and she’s not out in these streets,” Bakari Sellers, a former lawmaker in South Carolina and one of Ms. Harris’s top surrogates during her presidential campaign, told The Breakfast Club, a New York-based radio show, last month. “I want her in these places actually talking to real people.”

The Infrastructure Bill at a Glance

The bill receives final approval. The House [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/us/politics/house-infrastructure-reconciliation.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=style-infrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/05/us/politics/house-infrastructure-reconciliation.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=style-infrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)] to

rebuild the country's aging public works system. The proposal is a central plank of President Biden's economic agenda, which [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/15/us/politics/biden-signs-infrastructure-bill.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/15/us/politics/biden-signs-infrastructure-bill.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)]. Here's what's [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/07/28/upshot/infrastructure-breakdown.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2021/07/28/upshot/infrastructure-breakdown.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)]:

Transportation. The proposal would see tens of billions of dollars in [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/states-infrastructure-bill-funding.html?searchResultPosition=2&action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/us/states-infrastructure-bill-funding.html?searchResultPosition=2&action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)] going to roads, bridges and transportation programs. Amtrak would see its biggest infusion of money since its inception, and funds would be allocated to programs intended to provide safe commutes for pedestrians.

Climate. Funding would be provided [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/climate/infrastructure-bill-climate.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/06/climate/infrastructure-bill-climate.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)]. The Forest Service would get billions of dollars to reduce the effects of wildfires. The bill includes \$73 billion to modernize the nation's electricity grid to allow it to carry renewable energy.

Resources for underserved communities. A new \$2 billion grant program is expected to expand transportation projects in rural areas. The bill would also increase support for Native American communities, allotting \$216 million to the Bureau of Indian Affairs [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/28/climate/native-americans-climate-change-effects.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/10/28/climate/native-americans-climate-change-effects.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)].

Internet access. The bill includes \$65 billion [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/02/us/broadband-infrastructure.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc"](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/08/02/us/broadband-infrastructure.html?action=click&pgtype=Article&state=default&module=stylinfrastructure&variant=show®ion=MAIN_CONTENT_3&block=storyline_levelup_swipe_recirc)]. Other provisions seek to stoke competition and transparency among service providers.

Local officials and residents in Newark on Friday commended Ms. Harris for highlighting lead exposure, which can damage the brain and kidneys and interfere with red blood cells that carry oxygen to all parts of the body. The neurotoxin poses a particular danger to children, whose nervous systems are still developing.

But even as she won plaudits for her appearance on Friday, her promotion of a solution whose future in Congress is partly uncertain risked creating another future political backlash for the vice president.

"This is just what communities need: to be heard," said Yvette Jordan, a teacher and the chairwoman of the Newark Education Workers Caucus, one of the plaintiffs who last year agreed to settle a federal lawsuit accusing Newark and state officials of violating safe water laws. "But this is a first step, not a last step."

City officials in Newark were not always eager to talk about the issue. Mayor Ras Baraka, who sat with Ms. Harris on Friday, was long accused of neglecting the problem, even mailing a brochure to residents claiming that “the quality of water meets all federal and state standards,” despite evidence of alarming levels of lead.

But after intense scrutiny from community organizers and the federal government, the city began to acknowledge the severity of the issue. Newark accomplished its turnaround last year before the passage of the infrastructure bill; Mr. Baraka received \$120 million in bonds from the county’s improvement authority.

If the Biden administration wants to see the progress replicated across the country, they will need the funding outlined in the sprawling social safety net package, known as Build Back Better, according to Erik D. Olson, the senior strategic director for health at the Natural Resources Defense Council, an advocacy group. Even that might not be enough; removing every lead pipe in the nation could cost \$60 billion, according to one industry estimate.

Mr. Olson’s organization has called for the Environmental Protection Agency to strengthen federal regulations that would require localities to remove lead pipes and recently sent letter to the agency demanding the administration prioritize investments to underserved communities.

“We’re worried,” he said, “they will be left behind.”

Politico

[HYPERLINK "<https://www.politico.com/newsletters/weekly-new-york-new-jersey-energy/2022/02/14/cow-poop-and-landfill-gas-shipped-to-california-00008502>"]

Weekly New York & New Jersey Energy

February 14, 2022

Marie J. French and Ry Rivard

Good morning and welcome to the Monday edition of the New York & New Jersey Energy newsletter. We'll take a look at what's coming up this week, and we'll look back at what you might have missed last week.

While New York and California race to achieve ambitious emissions cuts and lead the way on fighting climate change, the two states are on a collision course over an unusual suspect: using cow poop as fuel to power trucks. Trucks and buses in California are being pushed to use low-carbon fuels, including natural gas produced from cow excrement and landfills that would otherwise vent methane, a potent planet-warming gas, into the atmosphere. Enter New York. While New York doesn't have a coherent policy on how to handle these emissions yet, that hasn't stopped developers from flocking to New York's dairies and landfills looking for, perhaps, a new black gold rush to meet climate goals: cow manure.

"There's a bunch of headhunters out there making promises they can't all keep," said New York Farm Bureau president David Fisher, who is also considering a renewable gas project at his dairy farm. "It's kind of like the gas leases in the Southern Tier or the solar leases." New York's climate law requires emissions to be cut from 1990 levels by 85 percent by 2050. But the plan to get there is still on the drawing board, leaving gaps in policy on the biogas produced from manure lagoons at big dairies and rotting trash in landfills. So that brings us to dairy farms that once were only looked to produce milk. Now it's about using clean gas produced by cow manure, putting it in trucks, injecting it into an interstate pipeline — and selling the environmental benefits across the country in California under a federal program.

[HYPERLINK "<https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2022/02/murphy-continues-waterfront-tit-for-tat-with-hochul-00008194>" \t "_blank"] — **POLITICO's Ry Rivard:** Continuing a tit-for-tat over a bi-state agency meant to fight crime along the waterfront, New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy on Friday defended his state's plans to leave the Waterfront Commission. The commission, formed in the 1950s to fight organized crime around New York Harbor, has "long outlived its useful purpose," Murphy's chief counsel, Parimal Garg, wrote to Gov. Kathy Hochul's office. Earlier this week, Hochul's own counsel wrote Murphy's office to question the legality of New Jersey's plans to unilaterally withdraw from the commission. Hochul's office also argued the commission's crime fighting work continues to be useful. Murphy's letter said the commission, which is controlled by one commissioner from each state, "ignores the economic reality of today, where 90 percent of Port activity occurs in New Jersey." The commission was created before the era of modern container shipping, which New Jersey's coastal waters are better suited for.

[[HYPERLINK "https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2022/02/harris-visits-newark-to-promote-quick-action-on-lead-pipes-00008252"](https://subscriber.politicopro.com/article/2022/02/harris-visits-newark-to-promote-quick-action-on-lead-pipes-00008252) \t "_blank"] — **Ry:** During a Friday visit to promote money from the bipartisan infrastructure law, Vice President Kamala Harris held up the city's rush to replace thousands of lead pipelines as a national model for cities with the toxic metal in their water systems. Over the past three years, the city has replaced all 23,000 of the lead water service lines in the city — a remarkably quick solution to a long-standing problem. This is exactly what the Biden administration hopes other cities can do with the billions of dollars in the infrastructure package for lead line replacement, she said. Harris was joined on the Newark stop by EPA Administrator Michael Regan, members of the New Jersey congressional delegation, Gov. Phil Murphy and Newark Mayor Ras Baraka, all Democrats.

GOOD MONDAY MORNING: Let us know if you have tips, story ideas or life advice. We're always here at [[HYPERLINK "mailto:mfrench@politico.com"](mailto:mfrench@politico.com) \t "_blank"] and [[HYPERLINK "mailto:rrivard@politico.com"](mailto:rrivard@politico.com) \t "_blank"]. **And if you like this letter**, please tell a friend and/or loved one to [[HYPERLINK "https://secure.politico.com/registration"](https://secure.politico.com/registration) \t "_blank"].

A message from Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future:

Natural gas is accelerating our transition to a clean energy future. The pairing of natural gas with renewable sources has the potential to reduce carbon emissions by 78%. When available, renewables like solar and wind, eliminate emissions. When these sources are not available, natural gas fills gaps, ensuring affordability and reliability for all Americans while further lowering emissions. Natural gas is accelerating America's clean energy future. Learn more at [[HYPERLINK "https://ad.doubleclick.net/ddm/clk/520662025;328404102;n"](https://ad.doubleclick.net/ddm/clk/520662025;328404102;n) \t "_blank"]

Want to receive this newsletter every weekday? Subscribe to POLITICO Pro. You'll also receive daily policy news and other intelligence you need to act on the day's biggest stories.

Here's what we're watching this week:

TUESDAY

— **The Champlain Hudson Power Express** faces a [[HYPERLINK "https://on.ny.gov/3B577hL"](https://on.ny.gov/3B577hL) \t "_blank"], 1 p.m. The second one is on Friday.

THURSDAY

— **The Public Service Commission meets**, 10:30 a.m. There's no discussion items on the draft regular agenda.

AROUND NEW YORK

— **A revision to the plan governing water levels in Lake Ontario** will [[HYPERLINK "https://buffalonews.com/news/local/as-lake-ontario-plan-revision-looms-regulators-create-new-flood-forecast-tool/article_f1033a74-88fe-11ec-adbf-5fdb6e65f42f.html"](https://buffalonews.com/news/local/as-lake-ontario-plan-revision-looms-regulators-create-new-flood-forecast-tool/article_f1033a74-88fe-11ec-adbf-5fdb6e65f42f.html) \t "_blank"] impacts in specific areas.

— **Gannett offered their own take** on spiking electric bills, [[HYPERLINK "https://www.lohud.com/story/money/personal-finance/taxes/david-mckay-wilson/2022/02/10/spike-electric-bills-fuels-outrage-homeowners-blindsided-hikes/6710535001/"](https://www.lohud.com/story/money/personal-finance/taxes/david-mckay-wilson/2022/02/10/spike-electric-bills-fuels-outrage-homeowners-blindsided-hikes/6710535001/)] prices.

— **Hughes Energy is proposing** a [[HYPERLINK "https://poststar.com/news/local/energy-firm-eyes-trash-processing-plant-for-fort-edward/article_da04efa3-ad37-58d8-829b-c0a6d4f0195a.html"](https://poststar.com/news/local/energy-firm-eyes-trash-processing-plant-for-fort-edward/article_da04efa3-ad37-58d8-829b-c0a6d4f0195a.html)]

— **Mayor Eric Adams is** [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/12/nyregion/nyc-bus-lanes.html"](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/12/nyregion/nyc-bus-lanes.html)]

— **Borough presidents are backing** [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/12/nyregion/trees-parks-nyc.html"](https://www.nytimes.com/2022/02/12/nyregion/trees-parks-nyc.html)]

— **Crews began work on the roads in Wainscott** on Friday as [[HYPERLINK "https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/south-fork-wind-farm-hochul-1.50507069"](https://www.newsday.com/long-island/suffolk/south-fork-wind-farm-hochul-1.50507069)] of the state's first offshore wind farm, South Fork.

— **Fish monitoring devices** are being installed by the [[HYPERLINK "https://www.newsday.com/long-island/politics/sunrise-wind-commercial-fishing-stony-brook-cornell-1.50506745"](https://www.newsday.com/long-island/politics/sunrise-wind-commercial-fishing-stony-brook-cornell-1.50506745)]

— **An Open Streets** about face [[HYPERLINK "https://gothamist.com/news/fort-greene-open-street-suddenly-removed-then-restored-raising-questions-about-city-hall-interference"](https://gothamist.com/news/fort-greene-open-street-suddenly-removed-then-restored-raising-questions-about-city-hall-interference)]

— **Hemlocks on some Finger Lakes** are threatened by an invasive insect.

A message from Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future:

AROUND NEW JERSEY

— **New Jersey is eligible** to receive \$15 million this year to build out its electric vehicle charging infrastructure, thanks to the bipartisan infrastructure bill.

— **The drumbeat of criticism** continues over NJ Transit's [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nj.com/hudson/2022/02/nj-transit-is-reneging-on-renewable-energy-commitment-for-kearny-powerplant-activists-say.html"](https://www.nj.com/hudson/2022/02/nj-transit-is-reneging-on-renewable-energy-commitment-for-kearny-powerplant-activists-say.html)] with emergency electricity in case of power outages.

A message from Natural Allies for a Clean Energy Future:

Across the country and across our economy, America is building a vital and exciting clean energy future. Natural gas is accelerating this transition and can help us rapidly achieve our climate goals. By partnering with renewable energy sources, natural gas has the potential to reduce carbon emissions by 78%. On its own, natural gas emits 50% less carbon compared to coal, making it a lower-carbon alternative that fills gaps and prevents disruptions whenever sources like solar and wind are unavailable. Existing interstate pipelines for natural gas also

offer versatility for transporting hydrogen, renewable natural gas and other zero-carbon fuels of the future. Investing in natural gas infrastructure equips us for continued innovation while ensuring an affordable, reliable transition for all Americans. Natural gas is accelerating our clean energy future. Learn more at [HYPERLINK

"https://ad.doubleclick.net/ddm/clk/520662019;328404096;c" \t "_blank"]

Spectrum News 1

[HYPERLINK "https://www.ny1.com/nyc/all-boroughs/news/2022/02/11/kamala-harris-newark-lead-pipe-project-funds-environment"]

Harris: Newark's lead pipe replacement serves as model for projects 'around the country'

February 11, 2022

Rachel Tillman

Vice President Kamala Harris traveled to Newark, New Jersey on Friday to highlight the city's efforts to remove all lead pipes from its water system, saying the administration hopes to model a nationwide effort after Newark's program.

What You Need To Know

- Vice President Kamala Harris traveled to Newark, New Jersey on Friday to highlight the city's efforts to remove all lead pipes from its water system
- Newark began a massive overhaul of the over 22,000 lead pipes making up its underground waterways in 2019 after being sued by an environmental group
- The Biden-Harris administration in mid December announced an initiative to replace all lead pipes across the United States over the next 10 years
- The administration hopes to use Newark "as a model of what we will do around the country," Harris said Friday

"It's hurting our babies," Harris said of lead in drinking water. "Over half of the children in our nation who are under the age of six are at risk on this issue."

Newark had, for decades, been plagued with reports of high levels of lead in its drinking water — and only began a massive overhaul of the over 22,000 lead pipes making up its underground waterways in 2019 after being sued by an environmental group over the high levels of lead making its way into drinking water in homes and schools.

While water leaving the city's treatment facilities was lead-free, the system of pipes across Newark contaminated drinking water with lead, which [[HYPERLINK "https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water"](https://www.epa.gov/ground-water-and-drinking-water/basic-information-about-lead-drinking-water) \l "Lead can enter drinking water, pipes, faucets, and fixtures."] "can be harmful to human health even at low exposure levels." Young children and infants are particularly vulnerable to health risks and developmental delays from lead exposure, as they are affected by lower doses of the toxin than adults.

Newark's new pipes, made of copper, were nearly all installed by late 2021, cutting what was expected to be a decade-long process by well over half.

"This is about a matter of great urgency," Harris said Friday during a roundtable meeting of Newark residents, all of whom were directly impacted by the city's lead water crisis, adding: "I cannot tell you enough how important your roles of leadership have been to remind community leaders around the country that when you speak up, often with great frustration, but with great purpose and courage, it matters and it makes a difference."

The vice president heard personal stories from Newark residents, including Vivian Carter, a life-long New Jersey resident who thanked local leaders for their recent attention on the issue.

"To get the lead pipes replaced and get the situation taken care of – as an educator, I know the effects of that on children," Carter said. "And for us to now be reassured that we, as residents in the city of Newark [...] don't have to worry about any more toxic lead, affecting the lives of generations now and those yet to come."

The Biden-Harris administration in mid December announced an initiative to replace all lead pipes across the United States over the next 10 years, [[HYPERLINK "https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/16/fact-sheet-the-biden-harris-lead-pipe-and-paint-action-plan/"](https://www.whitehouse.gov/briefing-room/statements-releases/2021/12/16/fact-sheet-the-biden-harris-lead-pipe-and-paint-action-plan/)]: "No child, no family, no teacher, no American should drink water with lead or be exposed to lead paint in their homes."

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law signed last year included around \$15 billion for lead pipe replacement, \$1 billion of which will go to New Jersey to implement projects like the one in Newark.

The administration hopes to use Newark "as a model of what we will do around the country," Harris said Friday.

Lead pipes pose a problem for nearly every state across the country, according to a recent report from environmental advocacy group [[HYPERLINK "https://www.nrdc.org/lead-pipes-widespread-used-every-state"](https://www.nrdc.org/lead-pipes-widespread-used-every-state)], the same organization that in 2018 sued Newark for failing to address the amount of lead in its waterways.

The NRDC found somewhere between 9.7 million to 12.8 million lead pipes are scattered across all 50 states, even in some where none have been reported; much of the lead pipe infrastructure is concentrated on the eastern side of the United States.

Biden administration officials have, in the past, stressed equity as a central focus of the funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure law. EPA administrator Michael Regan, who joined Harris at Friday's event, last year [[HYPERLINK "https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nc/triad/news/2021/12/03/michael-regan-epa-water-infrastructure-funding-states-tribes"](https://spectrumlocalnews.com/nc/triad/news/2021/12/03/michael-regan-epa-water-infrastructure-funding-states-tribes)] to focus their portion of the \$50 billion allocated to improve overall water infrastructure (not just replacing lead pipes) and to ensure Americans have access to clean drinking water in historically disadvantaged communities.

In a letter addressed to state governors, Regan called the investment “nothing short of transformational,” and added that it is the “single largest investment in water that the federal government has ever made.”

“As leaders, we must seize this moment,” Regan wrote in part. “Billions of dollars are about to start flowing to states and it is critical that EPA partners with states, Tribes, and territories to ensure the benefits of these investments are delivered in the most equitable way.”

The EPA hopes states and tribal governments will prioritize three specific issue areas with the new funding: Targeting resources towards historically disadvantaged communities, removing lead from all drinking water across the country and tackling so-called “forever” chemicals, which refers to man-made compounds that do not naturally decompose in the environment.

Forever chemicals are associated with higher rates of cancer, reproductive and immune system harm and other diseases.

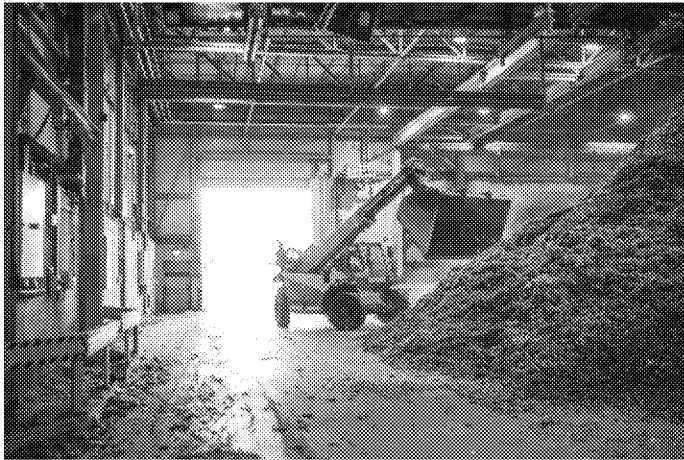
The VI Consortium

[[HYPERLINK "https://viconsortium.com/vi-investigations/virgin-islands-waste-management-spent-15-5-million-without-ensuring-it-got-best-deal-operated-on-yearslong-expired-contracts-failed-to-follow-competitive-bidding-processes-audit-finds"](https://viconsortium.com/vi-investigations/virgin-islands-waste-management-spent-15-5-million-without-ensuring-it-got-best-deal-operated-on-yearslong-expired-contracts-failed-to-follow-competitive-bidding-processes-audit-finds)]

Waste Management Spent \$15.5 Million Without Ensuring it Got Best Deal, Operated on Yearslong Expired Contracts, Failed to Follow Competitive Bidding Processes, Audit Finds

February 10, 2022

Ernice Gillbert



The latest audit from the V.I. Office of the Inspector General has concluded with more damning findings of yet another government entity, this time the V.I. Waste Management Authority, which the O.I.G. found was woefully incompetent in the way its leaders have operated WMA.

The audit, which covered years 2017 through 2020, found that WMA expended at least \$15,593,860 without ensuring that it obtained the best price for services. That's because the authority did not always follow its procurement policy requiring competitive bidding; in some cases operated its solid waste collection services with expired contracts and verbal/informal agreements; continued at least ten contracts on a month-to-month bases up to six years after contracts had expired; and received services from at least two vendors based on verbal/informal agreements, according to the audit.

Additionally, the Waste Management Authority did not adequately maintain its procurement files, the audit found; it failed to prioritize the solicitations of bids to ensure that its operations were done at the most economical cost and benefit; the authority did not establish an adequate record maintenance system; and some contract files did not contain all the necessary documents to determine if those contracts followed the procurement process.

The incompetencies are aplenty, according to the audit.

Solid Waste Contract Monitoring

- Waste Management did not ensure that some of its Solid Waste contracted services were adequately monitored for compliance per contract terms.
- Waste Management did not always document the results of their worksite visits.
- Waste Management did not establish uniform policies and procedures in both island districts to monitor its contractor's work performance.
- Waste Management did not require its responsible officials to document when they performed worksite inspections.
- Waste Management did not inspect some contractor's claimed work for reasonableness.
- As a result, Waste Management's ability to adequately maintain bin sites and ensure that billed services were correct, reasonable, and were for work done was diminished.

Contract Billing

- Waste Management paid some contractors for billed services that were questionable and unsupported.
- Waste Management did not adequately review contractors' bills before approval and payment.
- Waste Management operated, in some instances, with verbal agreements and did not document changes to contract terms.
- Waste Management did not establish an adequate record maintenance system.
- As a result, Waste Management paid \$452,762 for services that were based on a verbal agreement.
- Waste Management paid unsubstantiated charges of at least \$95,304.
- Waste Management paid at least \$23,539 for services that were not adequately supported.
- Waste Management could not ensure that payments to some contractors were for services that were rendered.

Contract Payments

- From Fiscal Years 2017-2019, Waste Management did not pay many of its contractors timely.

- Waste Management's late payments to contractors averaged at least ten months. One of the contractors in our review was paid on average 38 months late.
- Waste Management did not receive anticipated revenues from some funding sources.
- Waste Management did not have valid contracts in place to allow the agency to anticipate its contract cost adequately.
- As a result, according to FY 2019 Budget Hearing Report, Waste Management, as of March 2018, incurred an outstanding debt of at least \$14,193,145. Therefore, the VI Legislature increased Waste Management's Budget by \$7,000,000 in 2019 to address its outstanding debt.

The O.I.G. said the audit was conducted to determine whether WMA officials followed their procurement guidelines in awarding contracts, and whether the authority ensured that contracted services were performed in accordance with contract terms and conditions.

"We found that Waste Management did not always follow its procurement policy requiring competitive bidding," the O.I.G. said. "Specifically, in some cases, Waste Management operated its solid waste collection services with expired contracts and verbal/informal agreements."

Providing an example, the O.I.G. audit revealed that on September 3, 2013, WMA renewed an existing contract for bale-fill operations at the Anguilla landfill. However, after the contract expired on November 1, 2015, it was not renewed until July 19, 2021, the audit found. Furthermore, this new agreement was for five months and ended on December 31, 2021. "However, over five years and eight months, Waste Management paid at least \$5,473,570 for the bale-fill services performed without a contract," according to the audit. Bale-fill services is the compacting of trash into cubes that are then stacked on top each other.

Another example showed that WMA entered a contract to operate the Bovoni landfill. The contract was executed on August 23, 2013, and covered 2012 to 2017 for five years. On October 1, 2017, the contract expired and was extended to September 30, 2018. Afterward, Waste Management did not renew the contract until July 19, 2021. For two years and ten months, from September 2018 to July 2021, the contractor operated the Bovoni landfill without a formal agreement, according to the audit. The authority has paid at least \$2,981,163 for these services. The audit, seen [[HYPERLINK](https://viconsortium.com/editor_new/source/Waste%20Management%20Audit%20-%20Final%20Audit%20Report%202-8-2022.pdf)

"https://viconsortium.com/editor_new/source/Waste%20Management%20Audit%20-%20Final%20Audit%20Report%202-8-2022.pdf"], has five examples of WMA failing to renew or execute new contracts after existing agreements expired.

Contract	Section	Contract Expired	Amount Paid	Contract (month to month) End Date	# of Arch/Mes with no Contract
1	Angeles Landfill Management	Nov-2015	\$ 5,473,570	Jul-2021	5yrs, 8mos
2	Solid Waste Bin site Collection-St. Croix	Jan-2017	\$ 1,318,988	Ongoing	4yrs, 9mos
3	Residential Collection-St. Croix	Jan-2017	\$ 463,298	Ongoing	4yrs, 9mos
4	Bovoni Landfill Management	Sep-2018	\$ 2,981,163	Jul-2021	2yrs, 10mos
5	Solid Waste Collection Bin site-St. Thomas	Jan-2017	\$ 473,248	Jan-2018	1yr
Sub- contractor	Solid Waste Collection Bin site-St. Thomas		\$ 1,655,342		3yrs, 8mos
6	Consulting Services	Nov-2017	\$ 1,492,998	Mar-2020	2yrs, 4mos
7	Solid Waste Collection-St. John	Aug-2017	\$ 1,219,047	Apr-2019	1yr, 8mos
8	Solid Waste Collection-Transfer Station Management-St. John	Feb-2019	\$ 113,537	Nov-2020	1yr, 9mos
9	Bin Collection - St. Croix	Jan-2017	\$ 226,931	Apr-2019	2yrs, 3mos
10	Solid Waste Collection Bin site-St. Croix	Jan-2017	\$ 175,848	Aug-2018	1yr, 7mos
			\$15,893,860		

For a number of contracts, WMA did not advertise their availability, the audit found. The authority at times also failed to provide public notice when those contracts were awarded, according to the audit. Additionally, WMA did not adequately safeguard contract documents, providing only 7 of 16 procurement documents requested by the O.I.G. "Of the nine contracts for which procurement documents were not provided, Waste Management officials stated that files for six contracts were misplaced after the 2017 hurricanes. Two contracts' files retention period had expired. In addition, one file was for contract work that had been suspended," reads the audit.

Contract	Division	Advertise offer	IFB RFP*	Bid tracking	Estimate to order	Notice of Award	Notice to Proceed	Contract
1	Solid Waste Collection-STJ	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
2	Solid Waste Collection - STJ	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3	Bovoni Landfill Management - STJ	No	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	Yes
4	Landfill Engineering, Environmental Consulting & Accounting Services	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
5	Motor Control Center	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

*IFB-Invitation for Bids, RFP-Request for Proposals

"We found that Waste Management's Procurement Division generally maintains hard copy records and does not have an electronic filing system," reads the audit. "However, based on the seven contract files reviewed, four files were missing the bid advertisement, one file was missing the bid package, three files were missing the notice of award and/or the notice to proceed. Also, some files were missing multiple pieces of documents."

The authority also did not monitor to determine whether vendors were performing their contractual duties. "On St. Croix, we found that Waste Management officials did not document the quarterly house to house bin count required per the contract awarded for this purpose," reads the audit. "According to the contract that has expired since January 2017, quarterly container counts would be performed by a person selected by the contractor and one chosen by Waste Management's Executive Director in order to maintain an accurate record of collections. At our inquiry, Waste Management's official responsible for this task said that they

did not document the count. As a result, Waste Management did not have records to ensure the accuracy of the contractor's billings."

Current WMA Executive Director Roger Merritt, who was at the authority in 2017 and earlier years, [[HYPERLINK "https://viconsortium.com/VIC/?p=61037"](https://viconsortium.com/VIC/?p=61037)]. He was [[HYPERLINK "https://viconsortium.com/vi-government/virgin-islands-roger-merit-returns-to-waste-management-authority-as-executive-director"](https://viconsortium.com/vi-government/virgin-islands-roger-merit-returns-to-waste-management-authority-as-executive-director)]. At the time, the board said, "With his selection, the board looks forward to the dynamic and innovative changes he will bring to move the authority closer toward fulfilling its mission and vision as set forth in its enabling legislation, bylaws and priorities established by the board."

In response to a draft of the audit provided to Mr. Merritt, the executive director said WMA's proposed corrective action plan outlines the steps the authority plans to take to address the audit findings, as well as the responsible parties for each item. "We look forward to implementing improved policies, processes, and procedures at the authority to further support our efforts of being good stewards of the funds and resources we receive to provide quality services to the Virgin Islands community," he wrote.

The Office of the Inspector General provided a number of recommendations, including the prioritization of soliciting bids for expired contracts and applicable contractual services to ensure Waste Management's operations are done at the most economical cost and benefit. This recommendation was for WMA's contracts procurement process. For solid waste contract monitoring, the O.I.G. recommended that WMA establish written procedures to monitor contract services. It also recommended that WMA require its officials responsible for monitoring to document their findings on inspection of work and complaints made. Relative to contract billing, the O.I.G., among other recommendations, said WMA should ensure that contractor's bills are adequately reviewed before they are approved and paid, and investigate the cost/benefit of utilizing the scale house at the current location versus waiting to build the new scale house. For contracts payments, WMA should ensure that its contracted financial obligations align with budgeted and available funds and make appropriate adjustments when necessary, according to the audit.

